

Football: CU Buffs' Jeffery Hall looks comfortable at receiver

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It was an eventful spring for Colorado sophomore Jeffrey Hall and it could be an even more engrossing summer.

Midway through spring practices in late March, Colorado coach Mike MacIntyre approached Hall about switching positions. He asked if Hall would have any objections to moving from cornerback to wide receiver

"It's a move for the team, and whatever I can do to make my team better and win some games, I don't have a problem with it," Hall said.

It was roughly the same answer he gave MacIntyre.

Hall spent the final two weeks of spring practices, about seven sessions in all, trying to score against his old buddies in the secondary. By all accounts, he fared well considering he was playing catch up in trying to learn the playbook just so he could be involved in a higher percentage of plays.

It's probably not a huge surprise that he looked comfortable pretty quickly on the offensive side of the ball. It's where he played through most of his high school career, adding defense to his resume only during his senior year.

"He's done a great job," wide receivers coach Troy Walters said. "He's another guy that is coachable. He picked up the offense pretty quickly. To be in it only two weeks and to be able to go out in the spring game and play. I thought he did a great job.

"This summer is going to be critical to him to continue to learn the intricacies of being a wide receiver. ...We expect him to be able to contribute this fall."

Hall played in six games on defense as a true freshman last fall and nine games on special teams. He was the backup cornerback on both sides of the defense and returned kickoffs. Hall finished the season with 10 total tackles in 119 plays defensively and averaged 25 yards per kickoff return in six attempts spread over nine games.

The Buffs badly needed more speed and athleticism at wide receiver and Hall could work himself into much more playing time there in 2013. The only stats Hall produced in any of the four main spring scrimmages came in the scrimmages in which he was still playing defense.

"It was kind of bittersweet," Hall said of the position change. "I like defense a lot. I like giving a hit better than receiving a hit because linebackers in college are pretty big, especially going across the middle you can end up getting smacked.

"I don't think I'm that big so I hope they don't send me across the middle too much, but whatever is going to help my team I don't have a problem with it."

Learning the position from teammates during the summer won't be the only struggle Hall deals with this

summer. It's that time of year when the 5-foot-11, 180-pound product of LaPlace, La., misses being on the baseball diamond.

Hall grew up playing baseball and became a talented center fielder who could also swing the bat. He was being recruited as a baseball player by a handful of colleges after hitting .453 with five home runs during his junior year, but when he went public with his decision to play football with the Buffs the baseball offers went away.

Hall was pretty definitive about choosing football when he committed to former Colorado coach Jon Embree in 2012. Hall said it was tough telling baseball scouts he was no longer interested in pursuing the sport. Hall was asked if he still feels that way these days.

"No," he said. "I think about it every day. Every time my mom talks to me she tells me about baseball season and how my high school is doing. It's ongoing. It's like when I get away from it and my mind is off it, something brings it back.

"Seeing people play baseball on Farrand Field and just throwing it, I want to get out there and throw, too."

Sticking to his original plan to play football at CU will be a challenge with baseball constantly tugging at his heart. Hall said he is still committed to playing football at CU despite that yearning for the feeling he gets playing baseball.

"I think about it every day," he said at the end of spring practices this month. "That's always on my mind. First love."

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